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www.seiu32bj.org

Testimony of Rochelle Palache, District Director, 32BJ SEIU
Senate Bill No. 284
March 10, 2022

Thank you to the Human Services Committee for holding today's hearing. My name is Rochelle Palache and I am the Connecticut State Director and a vice president of SEIU 32BJ. 32BJ represents over 4,500 men and women in the state of Connecticut and 175,000 members up and down the East Coast. Our members form the backbone of the property industry – building workers, security officers, and office, school, theatre, stadium and window cleaners, and fast food workers.

I'm here to ask you to stand with our members and with all of Connecticut's working families to advance Senate Bill No. 284. Expanding access to HUSKY for all minors regardless of immigration status is an essential and needed step toward ensuring that CT's immigrant community has access to the healthcare they need and deserve. Last year Connecticut expanded access to HUSKY to children ages 0-8 years. Passage of SB 284 this year would ensure that children will not age out of coverage once they turn 9 years old and be left without healthcare. Moreover, the Covid-19 Pandemic has shown that the health of all of us is intertwined and it is not good public policy to ignore the health needs of any community.

If we want healthy kids, the best way to achieve that is to have healthy parents—but currently, we're leaving undocumented parents behind. Children do better when their parents do better. It has been proven that when parents and caregivers have access to health care, their children are more likely to be insured and to use and receive care. Connecticut should in the future ensure that all eligible Connecticut residents, regardless of immigration status, be able to access healthcare.

Please vote in support of Senate Bill No. 284 today. Thank you for your time.